

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee,

I am Stacy Ulmen, the Vice President of 1st & 2nd Class Cities for the Montana Municipal Clerk Treasurers and Finance Officers Association. I am here to speak today on behalf of the MMCT/FOA organization focusing on the importance of the Local Government Center and the vital need of their existence for communities big and small across the great state of Montana. This program is of most importance to those who work and volunteer in Local Government in our state. The Local Government Center provides critical training to our community's Mayors, Council/Commission members, Clerks and Treasurers and Attorneys along with County Officials including County Treasurers and Clerks of District Court. They also focus on Citizen Advisory Board education programs.

The local Government Center has been active in assisting with our MMCT/FOA Institutes for many years and I myself can testify to their importance to our association. There really is no other place for those in local government to obtain the skills and education needed in order to do our job most effectively. Not only are they educating those of us in Montana, but there are Wyoming Clerks and Treasurers that attend the institute as well because this kind of source does not exist in their state.

The Local Government Center recently assisted the community that I work for, develop an Ethics Handbook and educate hundreds of employees and Advisory Board Members on Ethical principles.

As a Clerk, using myself as an example, I came into my position as a City Clerk 10 years ago with very little experience. I attended my first education institute just 2 months into my job. I continued to utilize the Local Government Center in order to get myself up to speed as I was learning my job "hands on" which is very common for many Clerks and Municipal officials across the state. I spent 7 years working for a municipality with a population of 1,500 and then was hired by a City of 39,000. I could not have made that move without the education provided by the Local Government Center and I continue to utilize them more and more not only as a benefit to myself, but also for the municipality I work for so that I can serve in my capacity to the best of my abilities for my community.

There are copies of many testimonies from Clerks and Treasurers and Municipal Officials across the state speaking to the importance of the Local Government Center that we would like to give to you. Please consider the Local Government Center's funding proposal and increase the Extension's budget to continue support for the Center. It is extremely important that this source remain for all whom work and volunteer in Local Government in this state.

Thank you for your time.

Stacy Ulmen

MMCT/FOA Vice President of 1st & 2nd Class Cities